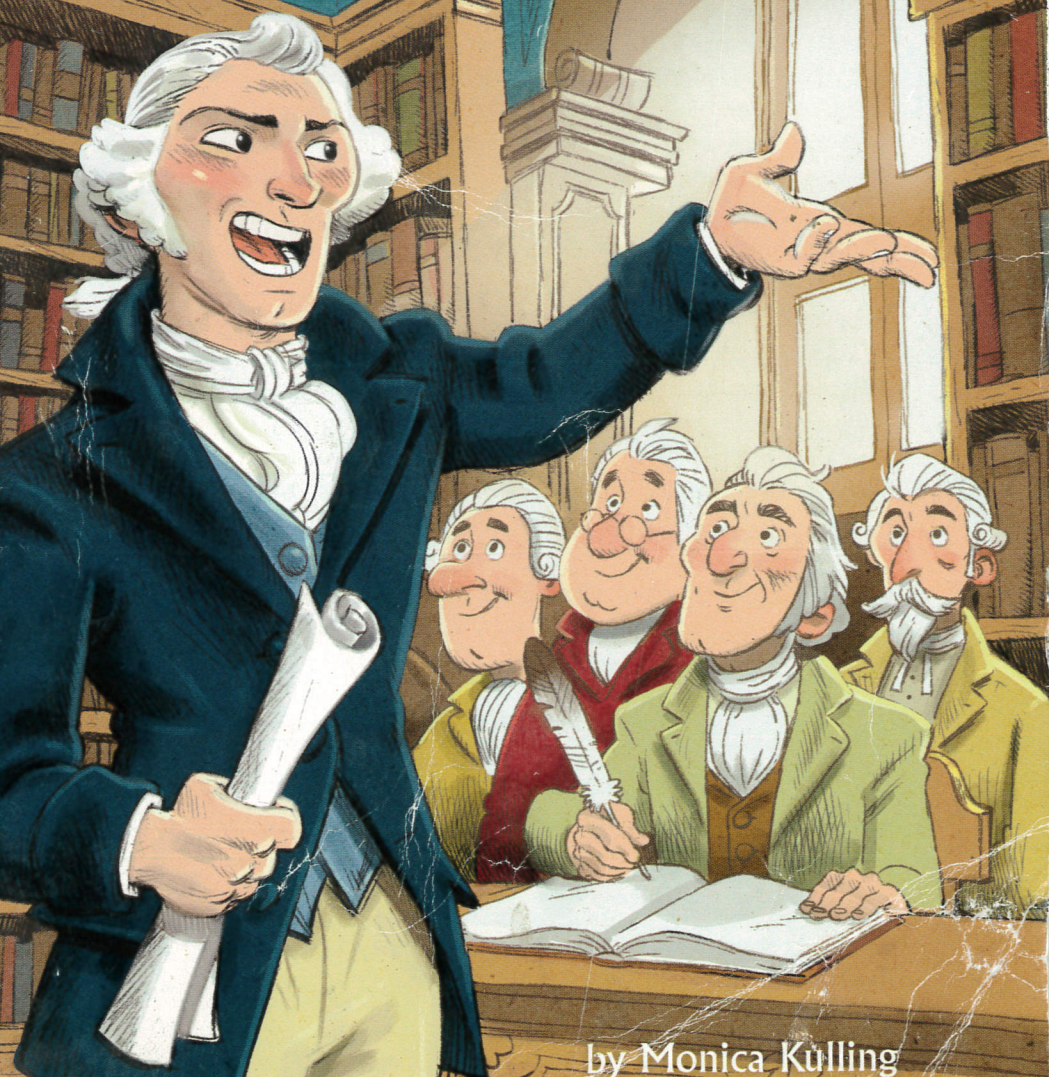


STEP INTO READING®

A BIOGRAPHY READER

Alexander Hamilton

From Orphan to Founding Father



by Monica Kulling

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the fascinating world of non-fiction! Here you will find natural science, biography, history, sports . . . and more.

STEP INTO READING® NON-FICTION READERS include a huge selection of high-interest topics to engage young readers. No child can resist finding out about such topics as:

- Animals, both fuzzy and fierce
- Brave, bold, and brainy people
- Wild weather, such as twisters
- Life in the time of ice mummies or the Age of Dinosaurs
- Supersized trucks that leap into the air

Why should children read non-fiction? The benefits are enormous. First, children build their vocabularies, encountering words that may not come up in ordinary conversation but are needed to increase reading comprehension.

Second, non-fiction introduces children to a writing style that supports learning. When explaining new concepts, non-fiction writers often compare one thing with another. Comparisons make learning easy and fun.

Third, children build their store of background information. Context helps readers make important content connections, whether they are reading about history, biography, or natural science.

Last but not least, non-fiction books raise questions and motivate children to find answers.

The Common Core State Standards call on us to prepare children for college and careers by teaching them to read, write, and discuss non-fiction. **STEP INTO READING® NON-FICTION READERS** can help children meet this goal while enjoying informative, age-appropriate books.

Happy reading!

Myra Zarnowski
Professor, Elementary and Early Childhood Education
Queens College, City University of New York



Learning to Read, Step by Step!



Ready to Read Preschool–Kindergarten

• big type and easy words • rhyme and rhythm • picture clues
For children who know the alphabet and are eager to begin reading.



Reading with Help Preschool–Grade 1

• basic vocabulary • short sentences • simple stories
For children who recognize familiar words and sound out new words with help.



Reading on Your Own Grades 1–3

• engaging characters • easy-to-follow plots • popular topics
For children who are ready to read on their own.



Reading Paragraphs Grades 2–3

• challenging vocabulary • short paragraphs • exciting stories
For newly independent readers who read simple sentences with confidence.



Ready for Chapters Grades 2–4

• chapters • longer paragraphs • full-color art
For children who want to take the plunge into chapter books but still like colorful pictures.

STEP INTO READING® is designed to give every child a successful reading experience. The grade levels are only guides; children will progress through the steps at their own speed, developing confidence in their reading. The F&P Text Level on the back cover serves as another tool to help you choose the right book for your child.

Remember, a lifetime love of reading starts with a single step!

*Thank you, Heidi Kilgras,
for giving me the opportunity to “power up”—
you are amazing! And, as always, thank you, Nancy.*

*For my mother and father, who came to
Canada and made it their home
—M.K.*

*To my grandparents
—V.F.*

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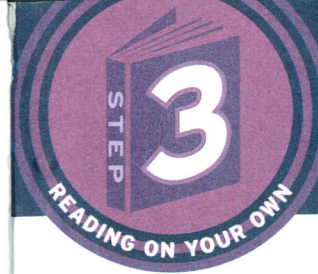
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A BIOGRAPHY READER

Alexander Hamilton

From Orphan to Founding Father



by Monica Kulling
illustrated by Valerio Fabbretti

Random House  New York

All hands on deck!

A ship's crew rushed
to put out a fire.



Days later,
the burned ship
docked at Boston Harbor.
Young Alexander Hamilton
had been at sea for three weeks.
He was restless and ready
to start a new life.
It was 1773.



Alexander Hamilton
was born in 1755
on Nevis,
an island in the Caribbean
(ka-ruh-BE-yun).



His father left
when Alex was a boy.
Three years later,
while living on St. Croix,
Alex's mother died.
Alex was now an orphan
with nothing.

Alex got work as a clerk
in a company that traded
with New England,
in America.
He learned
about money and business.

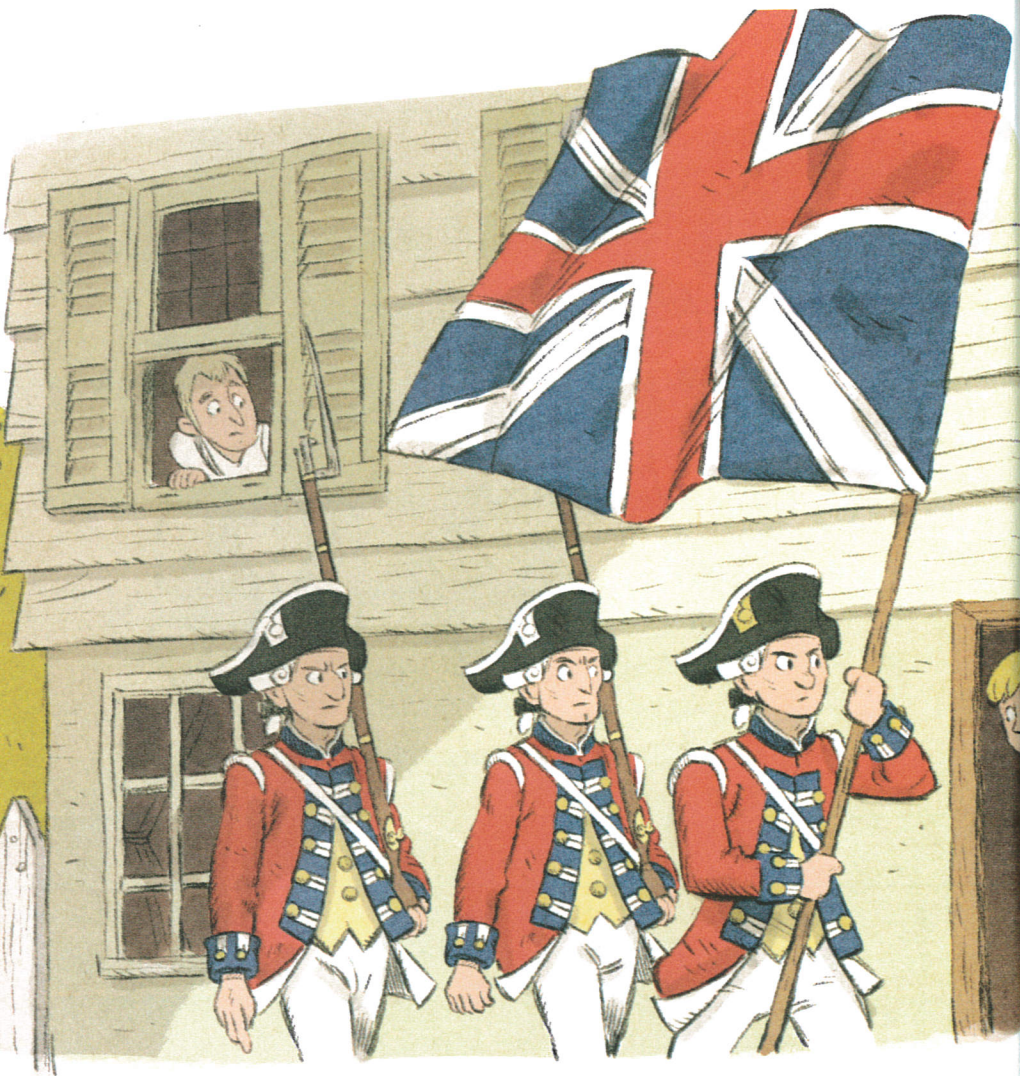
When the boss placed him
in charge for six months,
Alex ran the company
as though it were his own.
He was only
fourteen years old.



In 1772,
a hurricane hit the islands.
Roaring winds tore up trees
and blew away houses.
Alex wrote about the storm,
and his account was published
in the local newspaper.



Some rich businessmen
liked the way Alex wrote.
They decided to send him
to college in America.



When Alex arrived in America,
there were thirteen colonies.
England ruled America
and taxed everything—
books, sugar, coffee, paint. . . .

The colonists wanted the right
to make their own taxes and
to have a say in
how their money was spent.
Alex was at King's College
in New York
the night rebel colonists
took action in Boston.





The king of England was mad.
He closed Boston Harbor
to punish the colonists.
King George sent in soldiers.

Redcoats crowded the streets!
Alex became a patriot.
He gave speeches
about the need to end British rule.



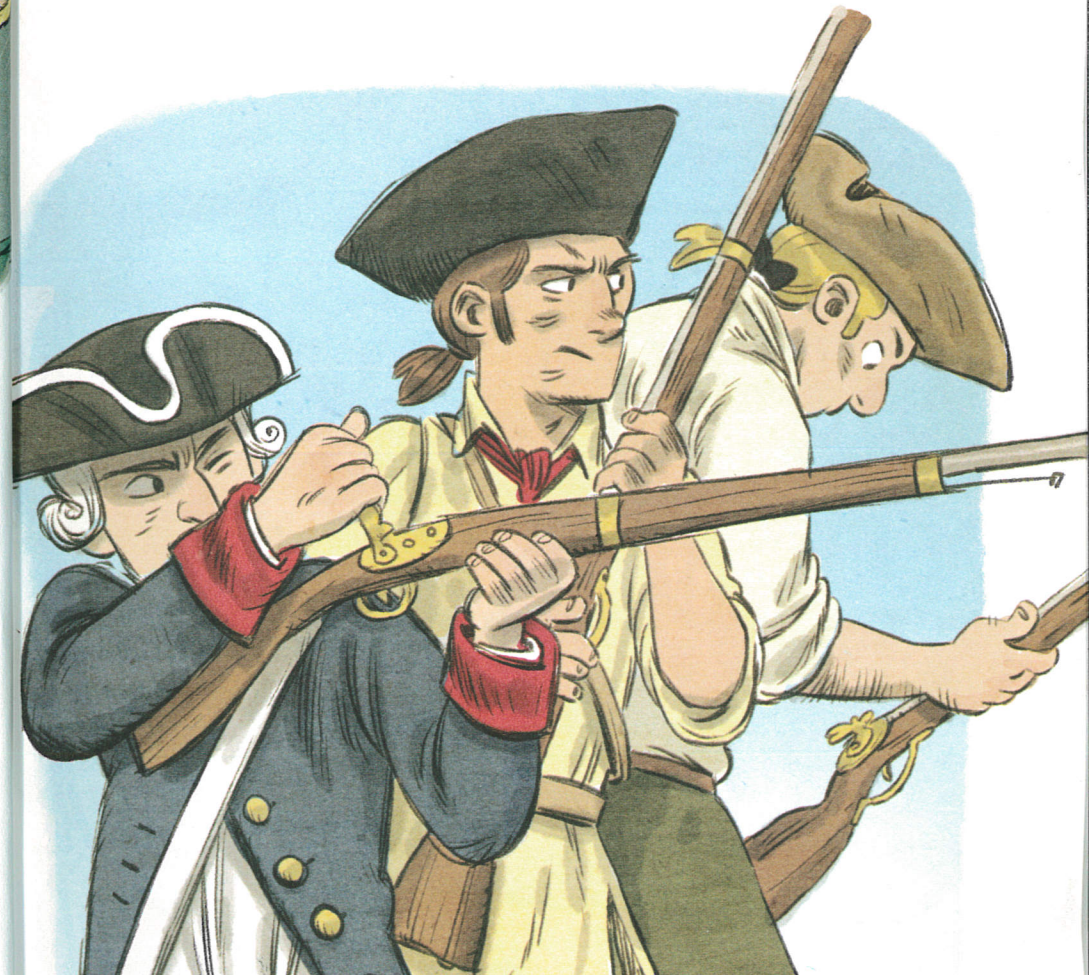


As a boy,
Alex had read about
wars that brought change.
War might be the only way
for America
to break free of England.
On April 19, 1775,
British soldiers marched
into Lexington, Massachusetts.
The patriots stood their ground.
No one knows who fired
the first shot,
but the American Revolution
had begun.



After college,
Alex joined the army.
Captain Alexander Hamilton
loved to drill his troops.
“Right flank . . . march!”

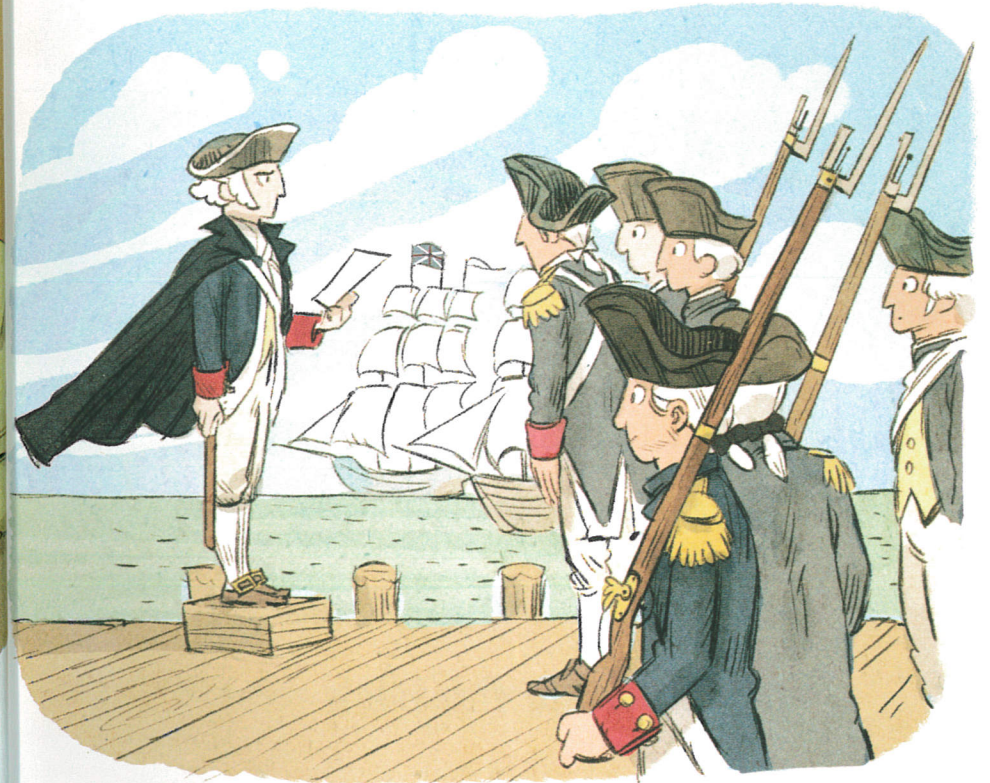
On Bayard’s Mount,
the highest point
in Lower Manhattan,
Alex and his men
got ready for battle.



The Founding Fathers had written
the Declaration of Independence.
It stated that the colonies
no longer belonged to England.



On July 9, 1776,
General Washington read it aloud
to soldiers in New York.
Captain Hamilton was proud.
Thirteen gunshots rang out—
one for each state.
In New York Harbor,
British battleships waited.





The British ships began firing.

BOOM!

Captain Hamilton ordered
his soldiers to fire back.



BOOM!

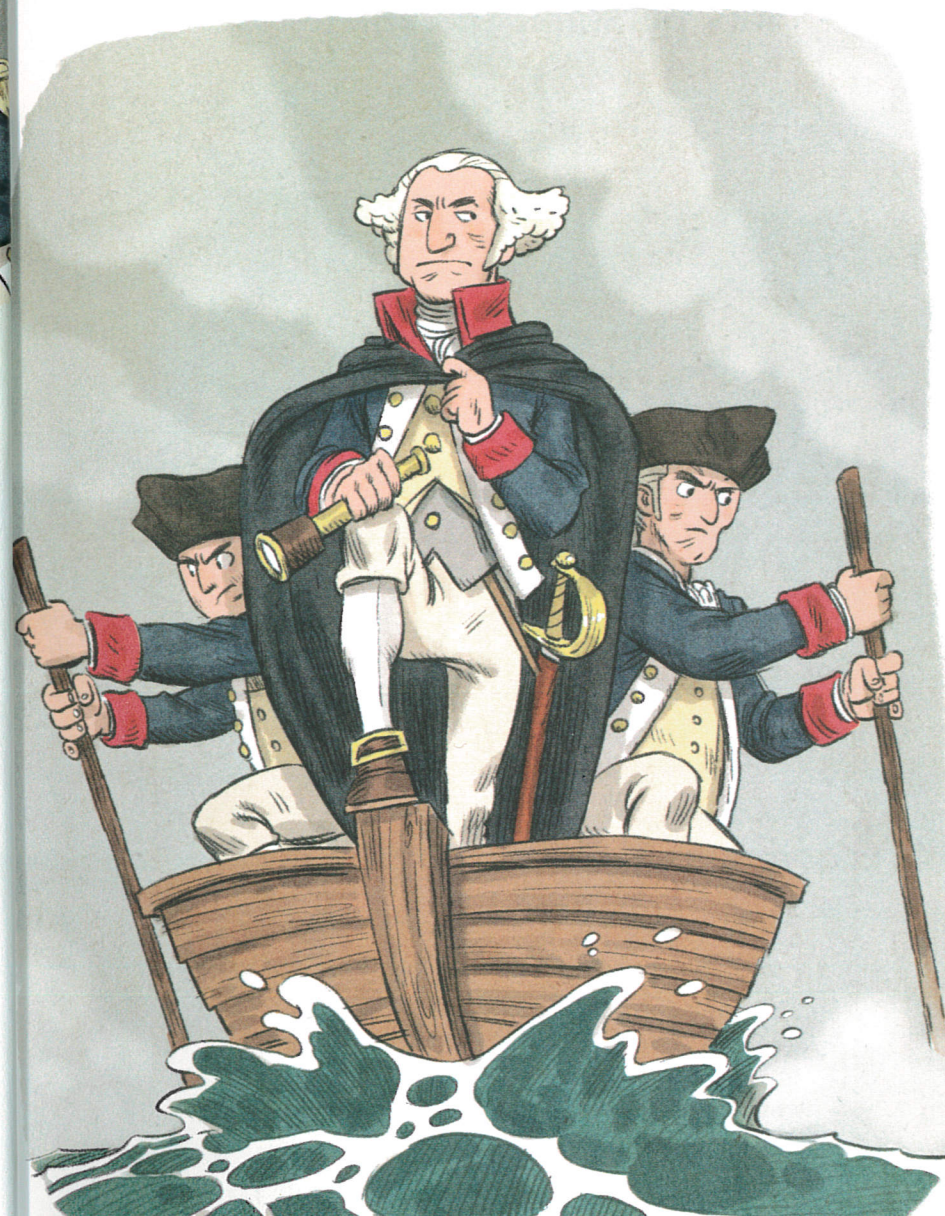
Hour after hour,
cannons exploded.

Smoke and noise choked the air.



Captain Hamilton
knew the British Navy
was powerful.
They had more guns and men
than the patriot army.

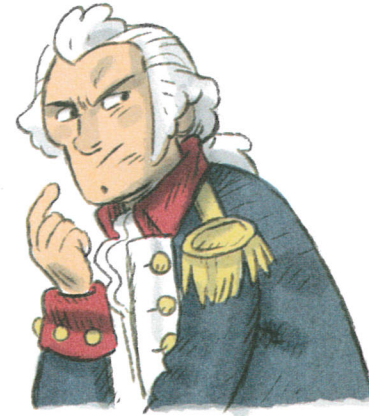
The British captured Brooklyn!
General George Washington ordered
people to leave the city.



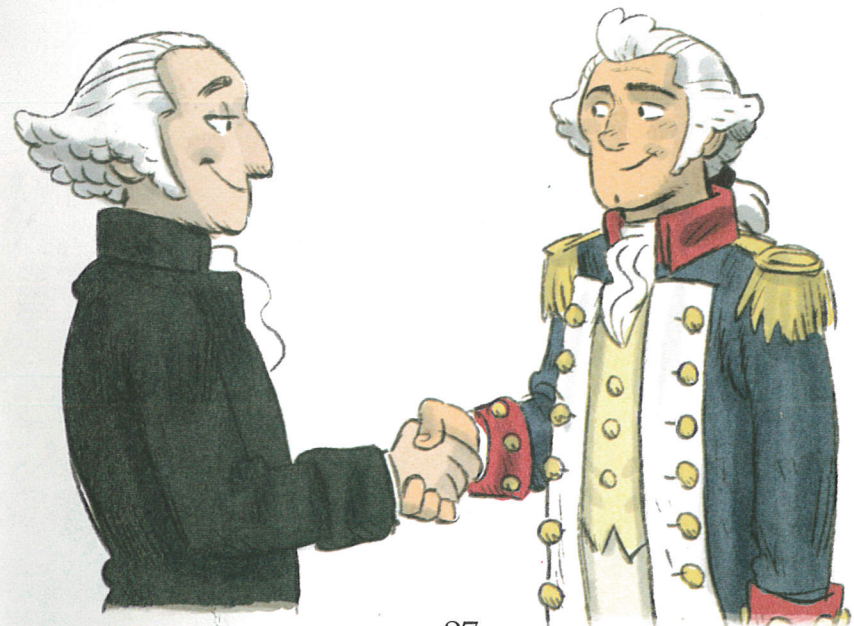
Washington had seen
Captain Hamilton in action.
He asked him to be
his personal secretary.



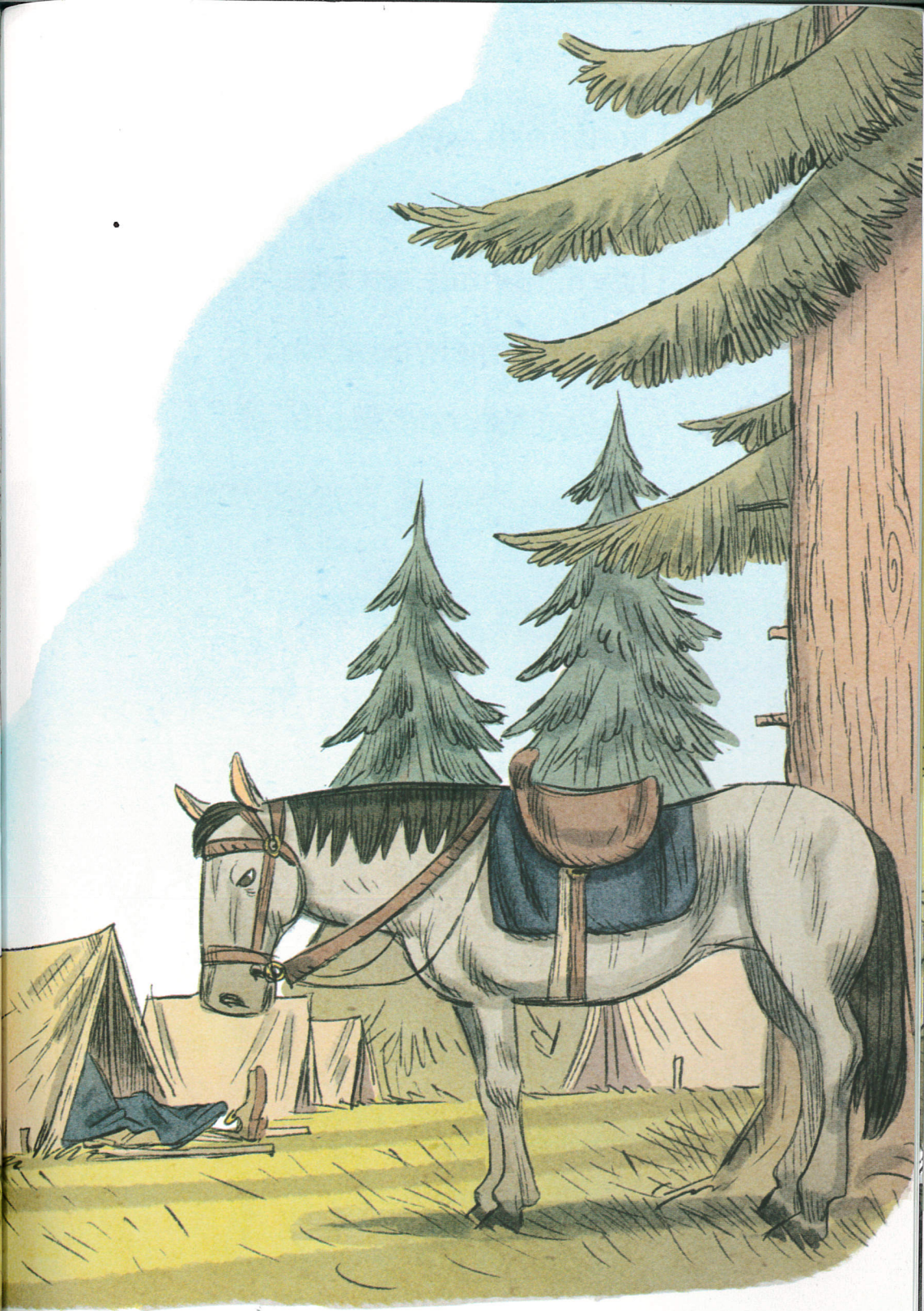
Hamilton had to think about it.
He wanted to be in battle!



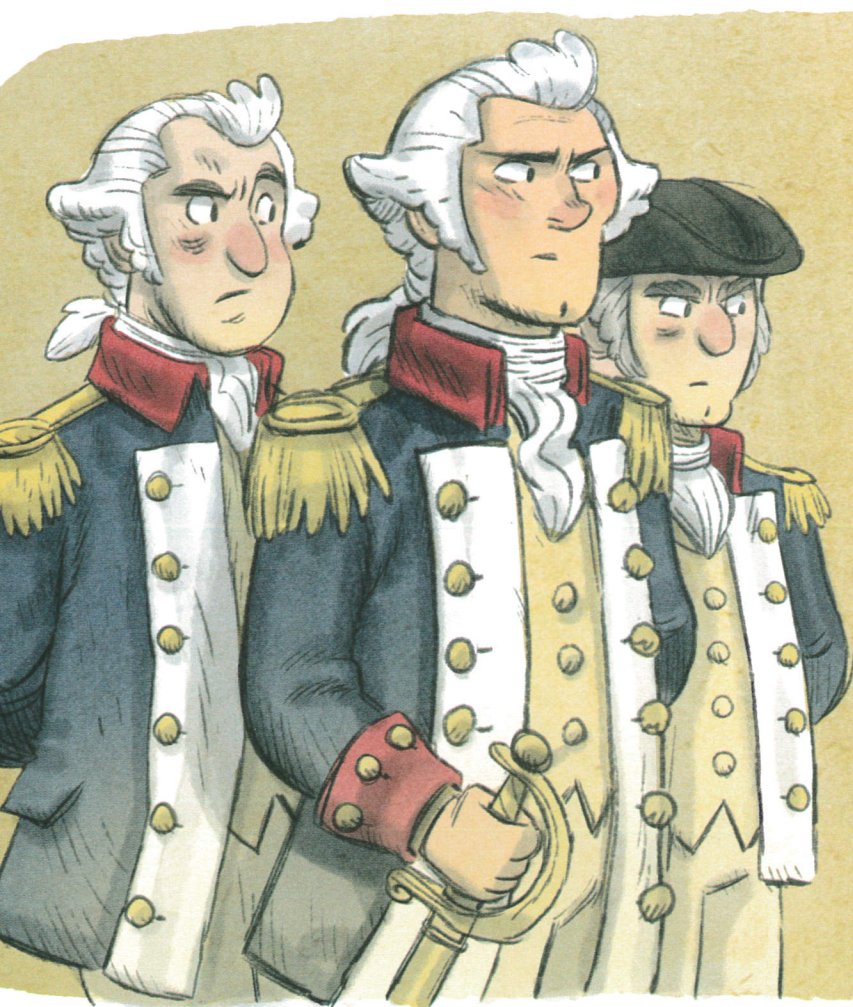
But he could not refuse
the great General Washington.



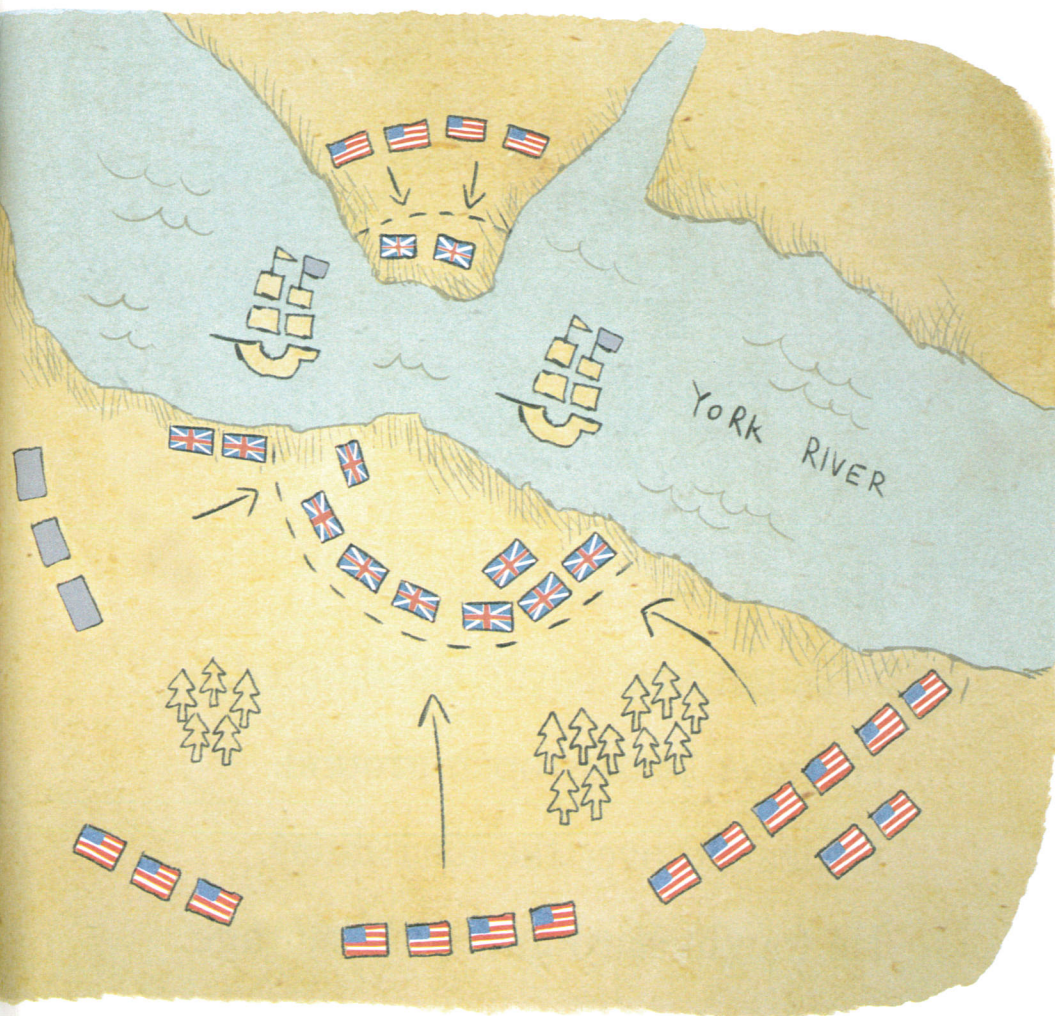
Hamilton wrote
letters to Congress
to ask for more supplies
for the army.
He was a fine writer.
He would do this job for years.
But Hamilton never quit asking
to fight again.
He got his chance in 1781.



The British were dug in
at Yorktown, Virginia.
They had built ten barriers
to protect their position.



Numbers nine and ten
were near American lines.
They were the weakest.
Hamilton was ordered
to attack number ten.





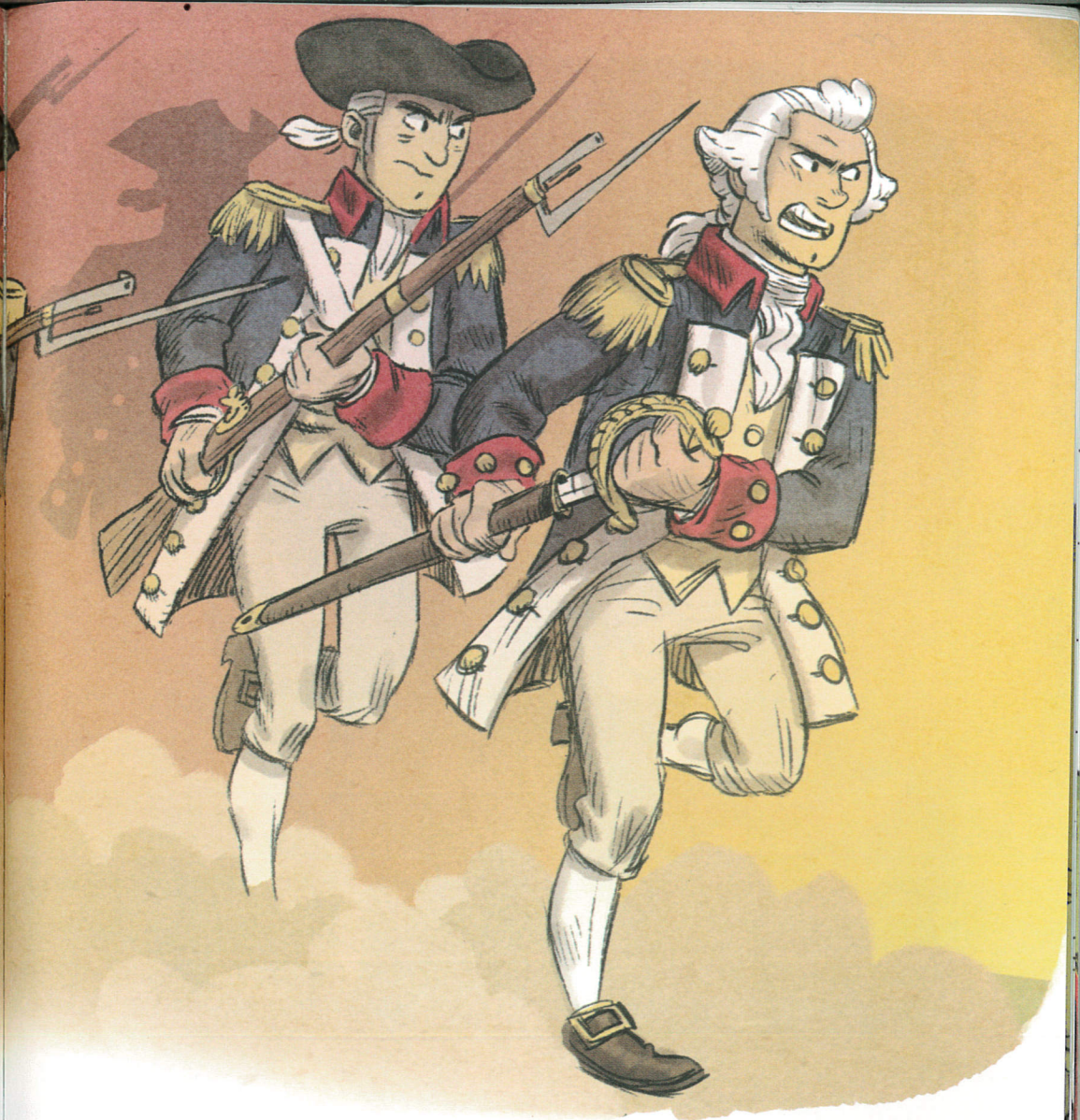
Hamilton led the charge.

"Let's get 'em, boys!" he shouted.

He raced across open ground.

He leaped over the barricades.

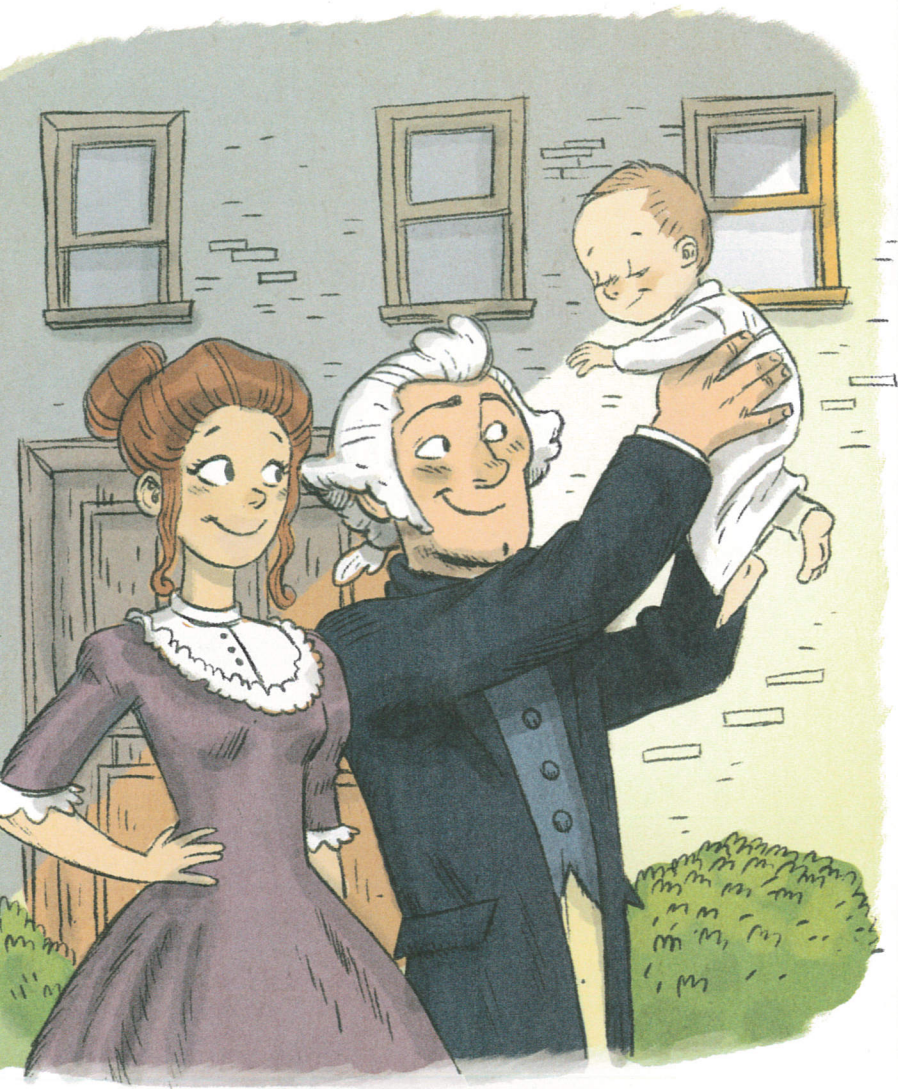
He fought hard and with courage.



The British were beaten.

The Battle of Yorktown
ended the war.

Hamilton was a hero.



It was 1782.

Hamilton left the army
and lived in Lower Manhattan.

He was now a husband,
a lawyer, and a father.

But he still worried about his country.

The states were in trouble.

They didn't work together.

They had no money.



Hamilton thought about
some of the books he had read.



The early Greeks and Romans
wrote about how to build a city,
run a government,
and take care of the citizens.
Hamilton knew the states
had to form a union
or they would not survive.

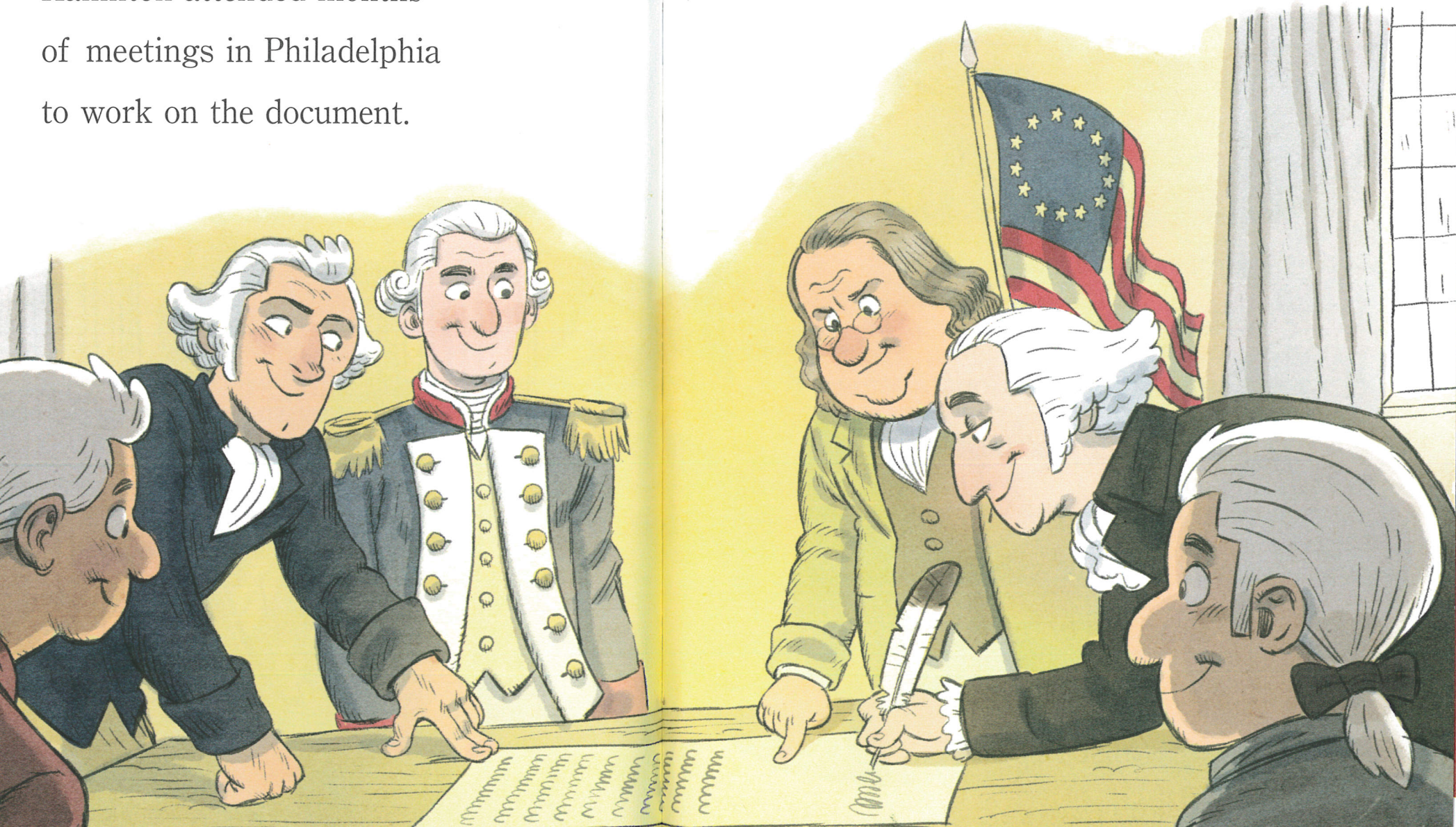


The states needed a set of laws.

These laws would become
the Constitution.

Hamilton attended months
of meetings in Philadelphia
to work on the document.

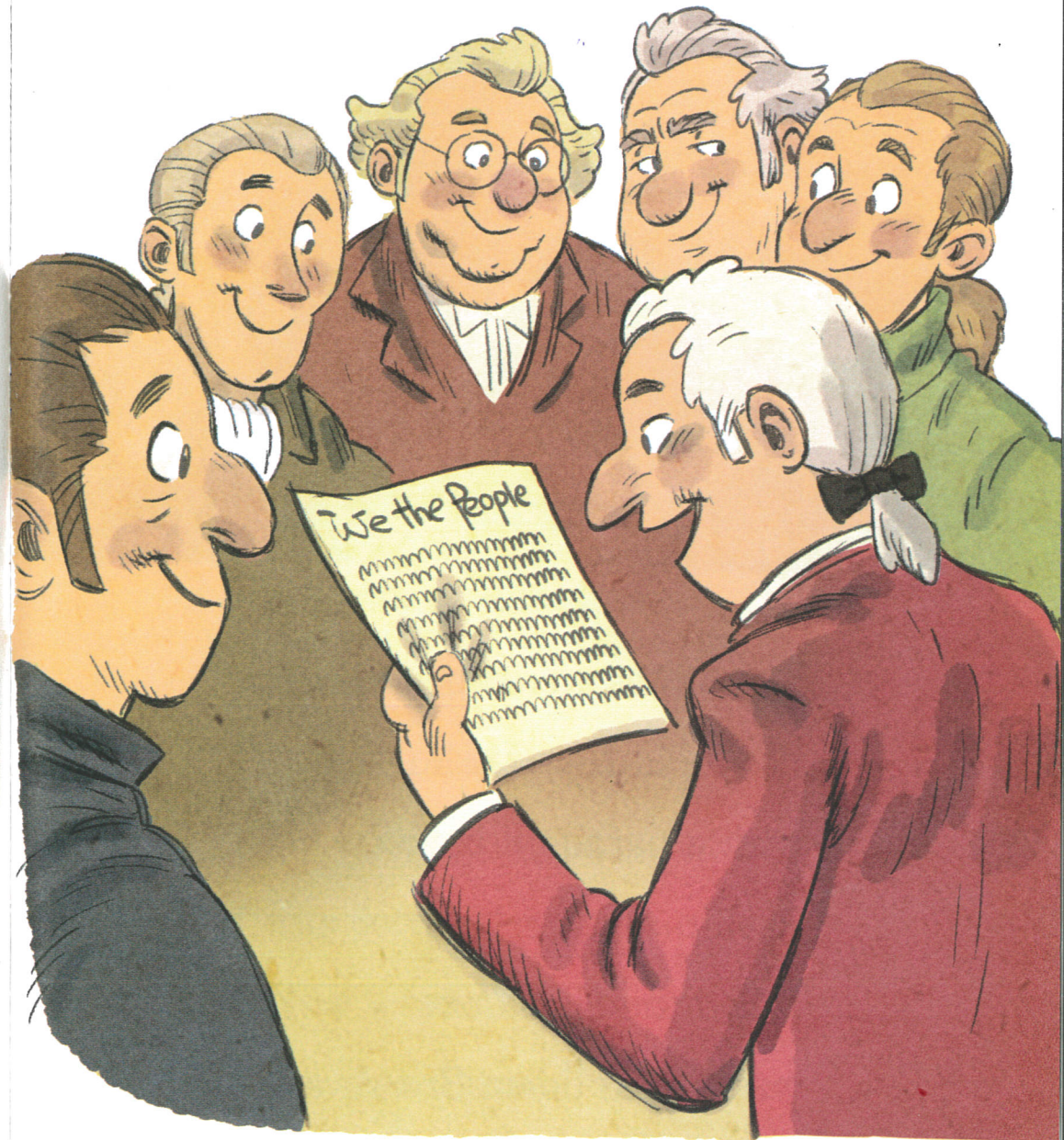
At least nine states
had to accept it
to make it the law.





Hamilton wanted voters
in New York State
to understand the Constitution.
He and two other men wrote
many essays that were
published in newspapers.
Hamilton wrote most
of what came to be called
the Federalist Papers.

Voters now understood
and accepted the Constitution.





The states were one nation!
People in New York celebrated
with a parade.
A ship on wheels
called the *Hamilton*
was pulled down Broadway.

Alexander Hamilton,
an immigrant,
had helped steer
his adopted home
into forming a union.
Now it was time to build
the new nation.



The United States of America
needed a leader.
The people chose
General Washington
to be the first president.
President Washington
chose Alexander Hamilton to be
the secretary of the treasury.

Hamilton was smart with money.
He helped set up the first
national bank,
with one national currency,
or money system.



Alexander Hamilton
always had very strong opinions.
He wrote articles about some of
the men who ran the government,
calling them awful names.

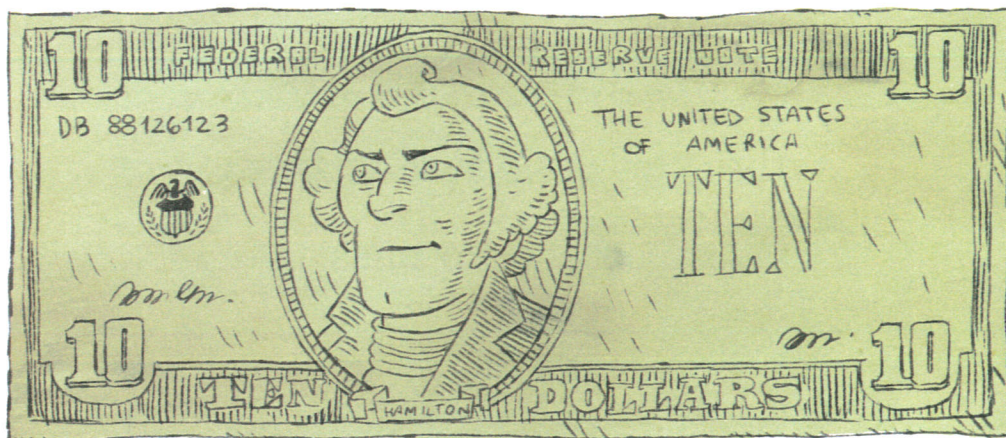


One of the men, Aaron Burr,
challenged Hamilton
to a gunfight called a duel.



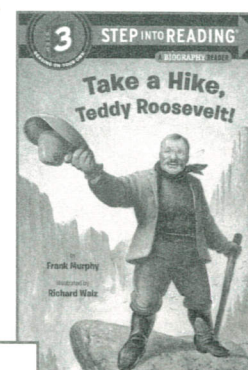
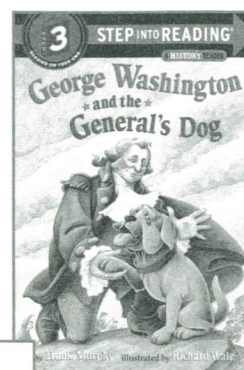
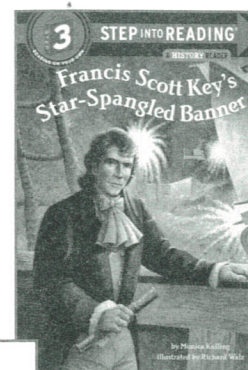
At dawn on July 11, 1804,
in Weehawken, New Jersey,
the pair stood face to face.
Hamilton shot to miss.
Burr shot to kill.
Hamilton died the next day.

Alexander Hamilton's life is a real rags-to-riches story. He came to America with nothing, but quickly found himself in the middle of making a new country. Hamilton's story is one of daring, hard work, and ideas. It still inspires us today.

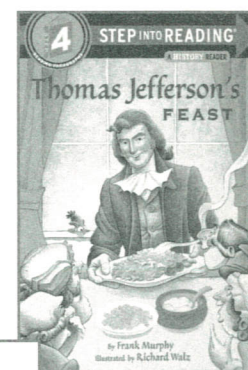
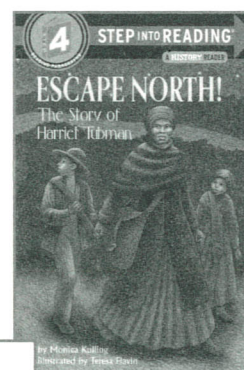
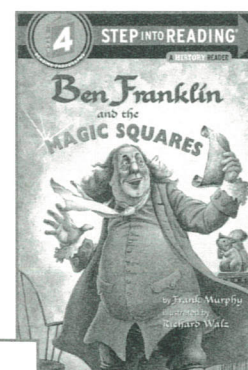


Have you read these Step into Reading books?

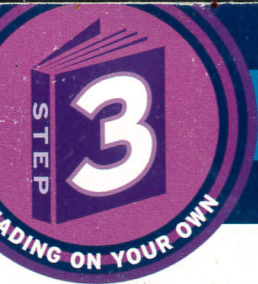
Put a check next to each one you've read!



Are you ready for the next Step?



For activities, information about Common Core, and more books to read, visit



STEP INTO READING®



Alexander Hamilton was an immigrant orphan.
His great writing skills and hard work paid off.
He helped shape America, his adopted country!

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